

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
April 30, 2008; 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Trena Carter  
Ian Kohen  
Tony McClendon  
Gil Palmer  
Rosalind Pegram  
John Roberts  
Jason Staley  
John Stroh  
Pamela Vincent  
Shiva Rallapalli - volunteer

**ABSENT**

Akua B. Agyei  
Greg Lewis

**\*\*\* Meeting Called to Order \*\*\***

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Roberts called roll. March Minutes not available.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith provided a tentative report for the donations account. The previous balance was \$5,405.60 with an estimated projected balance of \$7,808.30. The Deputy Director also distributed the initial annual dinner expense report that lists the Mayor's contributions for the dinner. Discussion ensued.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Deputy Director Smith provided the Director's report informing Commissioners that staff continues to be busy with intakes, which included a significant number of disability issues such as failure to accommodate and public accommodation issues.

Deputy Director Smith presented Commissioners with a request to consider a funding request received from Judy Lifferth. The request was for funds to print a book entitled, Polka-Dot Dottie Goes to School. The book is the second illustrated by Latina student Kelly Salgado, a student at Southside Elementary, in collaboration with Judy Lifferth. The book will be translated into Spanish and distributed to approximately 33 Latino families with the expectation that the book will be helpful for the families to learn English. Kelly Salgado has used the book with her family who does not speak English.

Deputy Director Smith advised Commissioners that the current request for funding was for the publishing and distribution of a second book. Discussion ensued. Commissioners determined that other sources of funding should be sought, such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, Heritage Fund, etc. Commissioners voiced encouragement to have Ms. Lifferth and Miss Salgado return to the Commission after other resources had been explored.

### **OPEN FORUM/CURRENT EVENTS & COMMUNITY CONCERNS:**

Commissioner Pegram announced that a conference for parents and students would be held on Saturday, May 3, 2008 at Ivy Tech in room 217. The Latino conference would provide information to participants about how to attend college with speakers from the legal and non-profit communities.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Report and Debrief on 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Dinner**

Several commissioners reported concerns about the length of time the Laws Award recipient spoke after receiving the award. Other concerns included the length of the Laws recipient speech negatively affecting the keynote address and extending the overall length of the dinner. Commissioners voiced ideas that included having the Laws recipient record their remarks ahead of time and playing excerpts after the award presentation, setting the time limit at two minutes to allow for the overage, having the presenter stay on stage with the recipient to maintain timelines or having the Laws recipient as the keynote speaker. Commissioner Kohen advised that several guests had requested that the vegetarian options should be offered 'up front' as some guests advised they were served the meat entrée instead of the desired vegetarian meal. Commissioner Palmer informed the Commission that the Republic reporter had to leave before former Commissioner Souza's presentation causing her to be omitted from the newspaper article the following day. Discussion ensued.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Vice-Chairperson Appointment of 2009 Annual Dinner Sub-Committee**

Commissioner McClendon asked the 2008 sub-committee of Commissioners Roberts, Carter and Pegram, to serve as the sub-committee for the 2009 dinner. Commissioner Pegram advised she would like to withdraw from the committee for 2009 and provide the opportunity for a new commissioner to serve and gain experience. Commissioner Vincent volunteered to join the 2009 sub-committee and was accepted by all. Commissioner Roberts suggested that the annual dinner sub-committee continue this approach, replacing one member each year maintaining continuity from year to year. The idea was met with approval by all.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Report on Governor's First Multi-Ethnic Conference**

Commissioner Pegram reported that she attended a workshop on Religions in Indiana and advised that participants were able to witness a prayer service performed by representatives of the Jewish, Hindu and Sikh faiths including a representative of the Dalai Lama. She went on to share that of all the teachers in the state of Indiana, only 5% are of diverse origins.

Commissioner Roberts advised he attended the 'Immigration in Higher Education' workshop and provided a copy of a list of all ethnic associations within the state of Indiana that he received. He discussed initiatives on the ballot in Texas and California that are being

considered to allow undocumented students to apply for state funds to attend state colleges and universities. He went on to advise that the Sagamore Institute will be visiting Columbus to study some of the initiatives that Ivy Tech is utilizing to aid disadvantaged and semi-disenfranchised immigrants and populace in Columbus to attend college. Commissioner Roberts went on to share information he received about improving communication with the Asian culture. His overall review was that the conference was a good first conference but he would like to see more information on specific issues dealing with ever-growing population of multi-ethnic native students. Discussion ensued.

#### **LIAISON UPDATES – GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE:**

Commissioner Kohen reported that members of the G/SA voiced their appreciation of the 2008 dinner and sent their thanks to Commissioners. He provided an update on the North student GS/A club, advising their numbers had increased to 15 and that the membership was comprised of a 50/50 ratio of straight and gay students. Commissioner Kohen advised the G/SA requested clarification whether the Human Rights ordinance is a city or commission ordinance and how could they pursue their goal of having the ordinance changed. Deputy Director Smith clarified that the complaint process governing complaints filed on the basis of sexual orientation is covered under the Rules & Regulations; that if they wanted a change to include that coverage under the ordinance, the Mayor would have to place it on the agenda to go before City Council. She also clarified that state law had not yet changed either. Discussion ensued.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Staley seconded. Meeting adjourned.**